

Friday, May 14th, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

2183 '99 MAY 18 AM 11:45

Re: Docket #98N-1038 "Irradiation in the production, processing and handling of food."

To whom it may concern;

Regarding the issue of food irradiation, we feel so very strongly the need to voice comment at this time. As spouses and parents, and with each of the various other 'hats' that we wear each day, we object in the most vigorous manner to the possibility that your office may decide to abandon the labeling of food items that have been exposed to radiation.

Many Americans have rejected the ingestion of irradiated foods. This is an issue of controversy, as I am sure you are aware. For the sake of those that are concerned, as well as those that are not, I must ask that you require all irradiated foods to show prominent labeling with the use of the terms "irradiation" or "irradiated," coupled with the use of the radura symbol.

In regards to proposed alternative terms, such as "cold pasteurization" and "electronic pasteurization", let me be blunt -- these are intentionally misleading, designed to reduce consumer awareness and alarm. Shame on any of you who would intentionally mislead your fellow Americans. Such practices should not be employed in the administration of the greatest country on the earth. It amounts to deceit, and should be considered unworthy in our nation.

Additionally, the absence of statements asserting the facts that irradiation destroys vitamins and causes other changes in sensory and spoilage qualities, facts which would not be obvious or expected by the the consuming public, is also misleading to the consumer. Surely truth in labeling is the least that Americans should be able to expect of our FDA.

Can you please act responsibly and ethically as you make these policy decisions, and place the needs of the consumer higher than that of business and technology?

Most Sincerely,

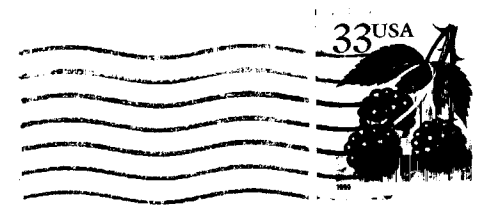
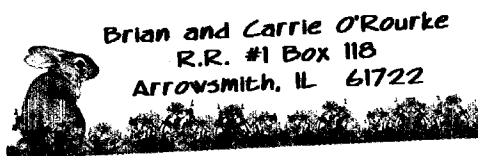


Mr. and Mrs. Brian O'Rourke and Family
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cc: W. Clinton, President
A. Gore, Vice President
Thomas Ewing, U.S. Repr.
Dick Durbin, U.S. Senator
Peter Fitzgerald, U.S. Senator

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